

# The 1989 RTA Legislative Program Initiative



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# Caution '89



*A blueprint for keeping  
Public Transportation*

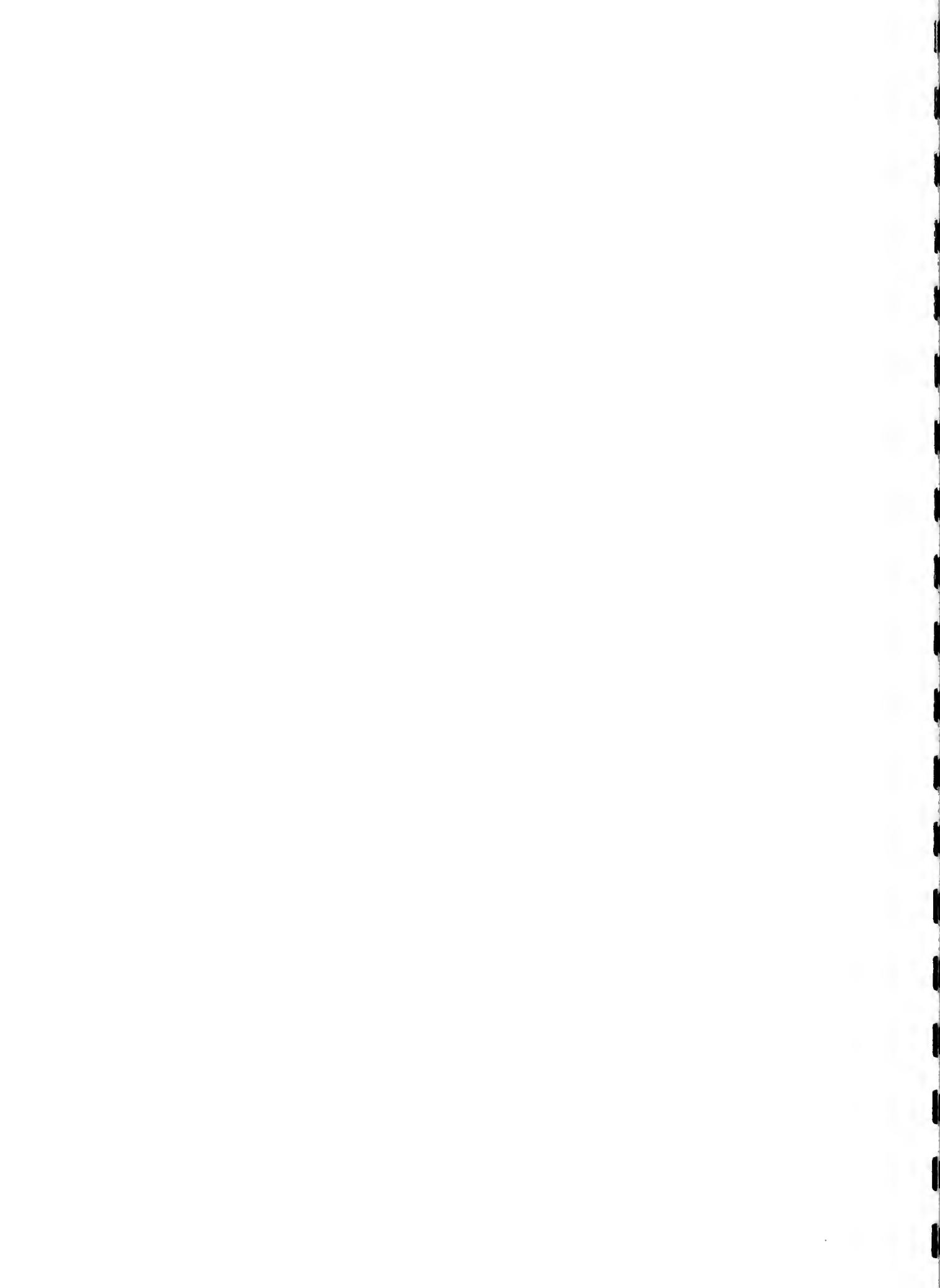
*safe...  
dependable...  
affordable...  
into the 21st century!*

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# The Problem

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***The \$15 billion mass transit system that links two-thirds of the people of Illinois is aging—dangerously fast.***

Our 1,200 elevated cars and 950 trains...the 1,400 miles of tracks they run on... the 100 year-old bridges and structures that support them... the 3,000 buses and the 476 stations are reaching the end of the line for reasonable safety, mechanical and structural integrity. **And it is carrying 2.5 million passengers each work day!**

**We are watching our greatest transportation assets deteriorate beyond the point of simple first aid.** We have to start replacing them in a well managed capital program. Train by train. Bus by bus. Rail by rail. Plank by plank. **And we have to start doing it—now.**

**There simply is not enough money to rebuild and replace for tomorrow.** The current funding structure only keeps the RTA mass transit system running on a day-to-day basis. This funding structure does not keep up with replacement needs of buses, trains, tracks... capital needs.

Federal money is being cut back at a time when capital spending has to be stepped up.

**More than \$6 billion (in 1987 dollars) is needed over the next ten years to put the RTA system back on a safe and dependable capital footing by the year 2000.**

***The RTA is not predicting disaster...  
We're trying to prevent one!***



# The Legislature

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*In 1983 the Illinois General Assembly addressed the RTA's operating needs.*

The 1983 legislation reorganized the RTA, provided operating funds and required that at least half of the RTA's total operating costs be paid out of the fare box. This is the most demanding fare box requirement in the United States today.

*... but the General Assembly put off to the future the RTA's capital needs.*

The 1983 legislation did not specifically target revenue sources to pay for the replacement and improvement of vehicles, equipment, structures and facilities. The burden placed on the fare box for capital improvements would drive fares so high that mass transit would no longer be competitive or affordable.

The General Assembly in 1983 recognized this fact when it put off to the future the means for paying for these capital needs.

*That future is now.*



# Capital Program

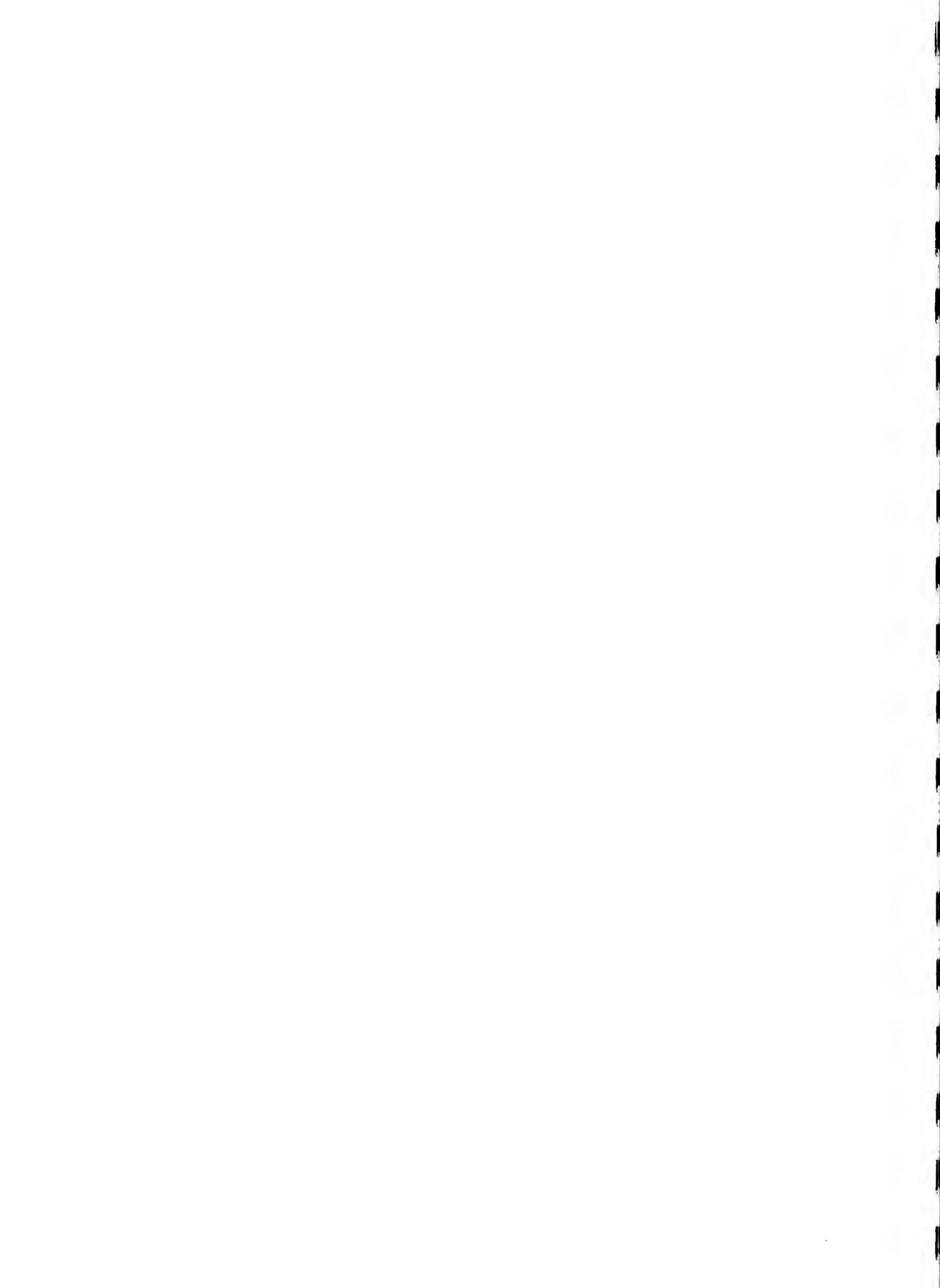
Identified 5-Year Program Needs...

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**The RTA and its three Service Boards (the CTA, Metra and Pace) have identified capital program needs for the next five years. This capital program totals \$3.3 billion (1990 dollars). The RTA recognizes that while these program needs are real, this staggering total cannot be achieved through existing streams of revenue. The RTA's mass transit investment in rolling stock, vehicles, track, structures, facilities and equipment must be maintained and brought up to date to meet the transportation needs of Northeastern Illinois. New capital funding is required to start addressing this serious problem.**

## *for the Chicago Transit Authority ...*

- Rehabilitate 455 elevated cars
- Provide funds for ongoing track and structure repairs
- Complete the purchase of up to 166 new elevated cars
- Purchase 90 cars needed for the new Southwest Transit Line
- Purchase 812 new buses for the CTA's 2,247-bus fleet
- Replace two 80-year-old bus garages and renovate two 40-year-old garage (these garages account for only 4 of the 7 CTA garages which exceed useful lives of 40 years)
- Expand and improve the CTA's only facility for performing major bus repairs and overhauls
- Construct a new facility for performing major repairs and overhauls on elevated cars
- Fund improvements to the system which powers the elevated trains
- Reconstruct 22 stations and improve the safety and amenities of stations systemwide
- Modernize the CTA's fare collection systems



## Capital Program Identified 5-Year Program Needs...

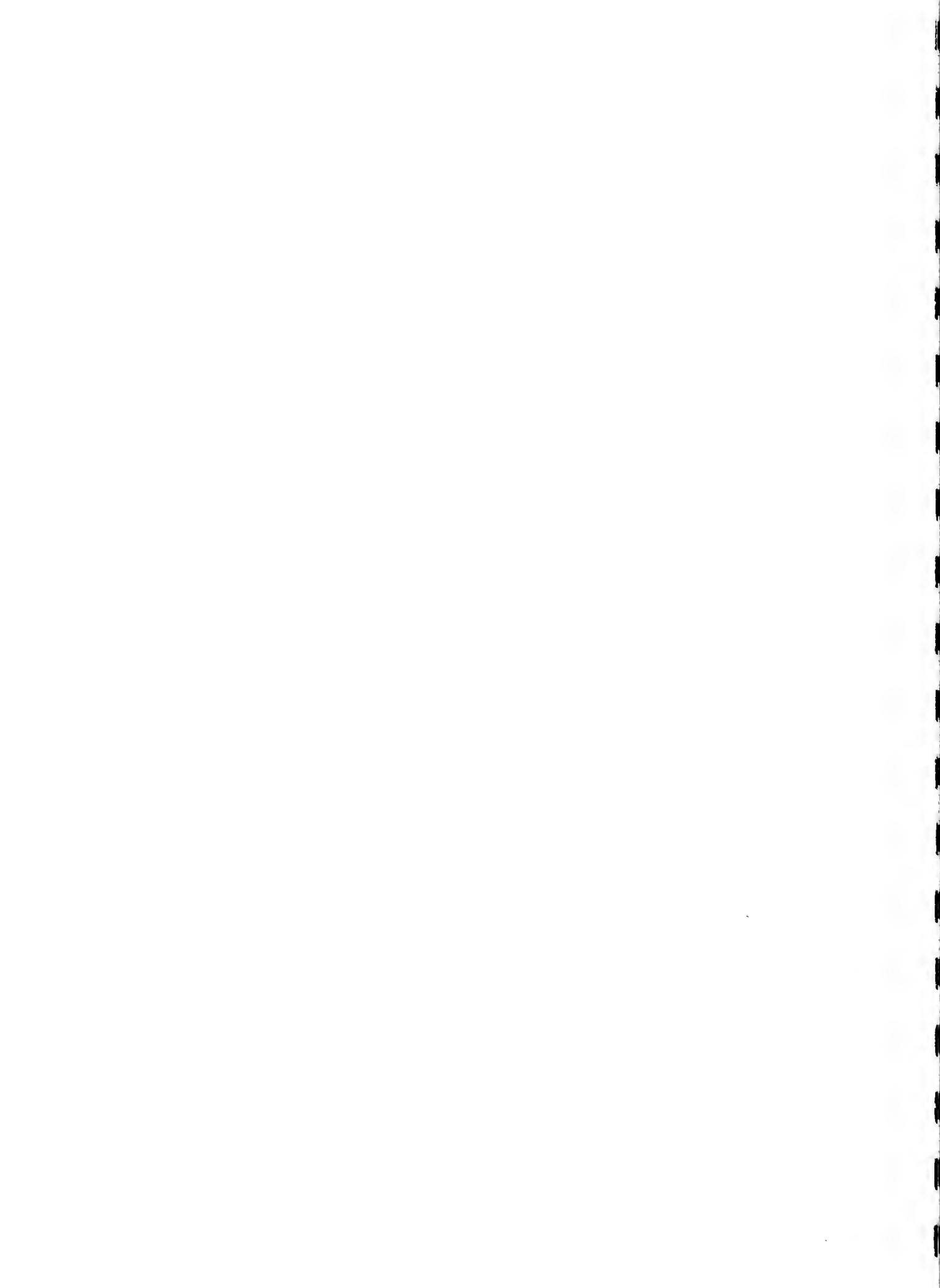
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### *for Metra (Commuter Rail Division) ...*

- Rehabilitate 307 rail cars
- Rehabilitate 37 locomotives
- Purchase 207 cars
- Purchase 35 locomotives
- Continue an aggressive program to repair or replace track
- Continue an aggressive program to repair or replace bridges
- Complete construction of a new heavy repair shop to maintain Metra's electric powered fleet
- Complete the rehabilitation of the Chicago Northwestern Station (by 1993)
- Institute a program to systematically maintain and rehabilitate all Metra stations

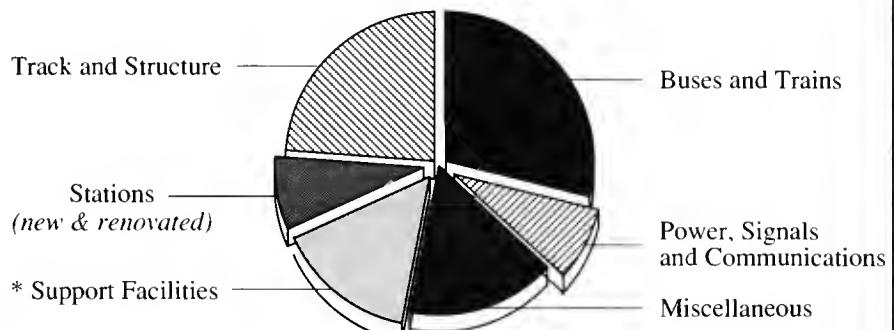
### *for Pace (Suburban Bus Division) ...*

- Rehabilitate or expand 5 of Pace's 11 bus garages
- Purchase 129 fixed route buses
- Purchase 123 paratransit vans
- Construct two new paratransit facilities and new bus garages
- Replace farebox and radio systems to eliminate farebox jams and communication problems
- Construct a new joint development transportation center

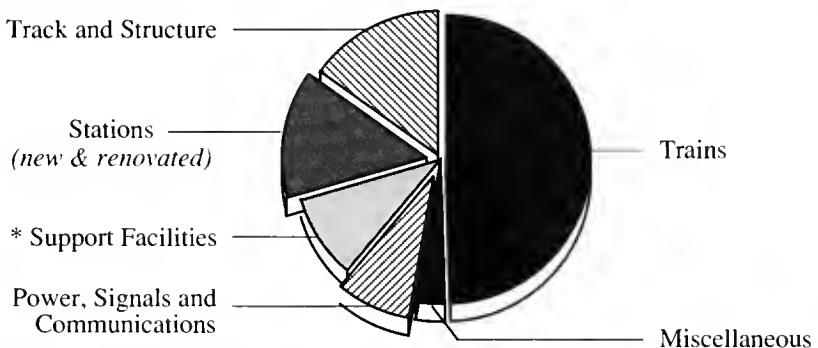


## Capital Needs By Service Board...

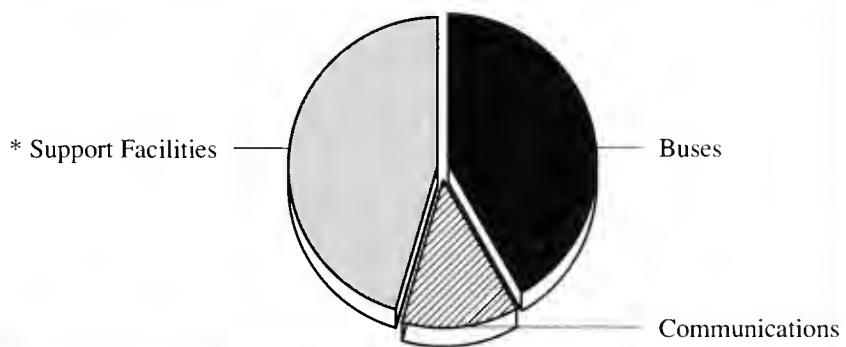
***Chicago Transit Authority's Five Year Capital Needs***



***Metra's Five Year Capital Needs***



***Pace's Five Year Capital Needs***



\* Maintenance Facilities and Equipment



Possible

# Legislative Solutions

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**The RTA would require \$3.3 billion (1990 dollars) to totally meet Northeastern Illinois' identified mass transit capital repair, replacement and service expansion needs over the next five years. The RTA's three Service Boards (CTA, Metra and Pace) are in total agreement that we must start addressing these needs now. The required state revenue stream could be achieved in several ways. For example... if the RTA were to receive \$1 billion in new funds, the required state revenue stream could be provided by the following options:**

**Gasoline Tax:**

*A three cent state gasoline tax increase region wide over the next five years would raise \$1 billion in new funds.*

**...or Sales Tax:**

*A 1/4 cent sales tax increase region wide would raise \$1 billion in new funds.*

**...or Other State Generated Revenue Sources**



# Questions

## Most Often Asked...

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### ■ *Why not just repair and keep running what we have?*

**Most of the RTA's capital assets are already beyond their useful lives.** Prolonging them with patchwork repair doesn't save money. Repairing the system *after* it fails costs more than repairing the system *before* it fails. Here's the reality:

- 1,541 CTA buses are over 12 years of age. That puts 70% of the CTA bus fleet past the transportation industry's 12-year bus life standard. More than 60% of the CTA's bus fleet has seen over 400,000 miles of service. Maintenance costs go up each year. Just like your family car, when a bus gets old and its mileage gets high, it costs more to keep repairing it than to replace it.
- CTA maintenance facilities are old, too. Maintenance garages servicing 700 CTA buses were built before 1910. They were designed for streetcar repair—not buses.
- More than 400 Metra bridges have been in service for more than 80 years.
- More than half of Metra's stations are nearly 50 years old.
- 99% of the CTA's elevated structures are over 75 years old.

### ■ *If we do nothing, how long will things last?*

**No one knows, but every day that a bus gets older, a bridge is used, or a new track is not laid, the day-to-day operating cost increases and we move ever closer to a decline in service.** On the other hand, improvements in the system can lead to more efficient operation and expand system capacity.



## Questions Most Often Asked...

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### ■ *What will this cost?*

**Billions. Six billion in 1987 dollars.** Independent engineering studies conducted between 1985 and 1987 determined that this is the level of funding needed to return the system to "good" operating condition. That represents \$600 million a year on a ten year schedule. By contrast, the RTA's current capital program is only able to provide half of that need.

### ■ *Are you predicting a disaster?*

**No, we are trying to prevent one.** Three of CTA's elevated lines and the Loop elevated structure were built prior to 1900. The majority of the 800 bridges along Metra's 1,000 miles of track are between 70 and 90 years old. We are rebuilding Chicago area expressways every 15 to 20 years. What about our mass transit system?

### ■ *Could the fare box pay for the capital program?*

**It would be self defeating.** Fares would have to be raised 60 per cent over the next five years to fund just half of the capital program. History has shown us that large fare increases sharply reduce riders. When commuter rail fares were raised sharply in 1981, ridership declined by 28%.

### ■ *How much can be put off for the future?*

This proposal contains what already has been put off to the future. **The future is now!**



## Questions Most Often Asked...

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### ■ *What's in the capital program for suburban Cook County?*

All three RTA services: Metra, Pace and the CTA directly serve Cook County. A continuation of this service is vital to the economic health of the county. Many suburban residents who work in Chicago use the CTA daily in conjunction with Metra or Pace service. The CTA, Metra and Pace *jointly* provide over 60% of total trips to Chicago's Loop for suburban Cook County. For the region as a whole, 1 in 5 of the region's workers depend on public transit to get them to work.

### ■ *What's in the capital program for the collar counties?*

This is a regional system and is of vital importance to the well being of the entire region. In today's world it is no longer possible to separate the needs into city/suburban. More than 35% or 22 million of Metra's total annual passengers are from the collar counties. 25% or nearly 9 million of Pace's passengers are also from the collar counties. Overall, more than 70 million of CTA's annual passengers are suburban residents.

### ■ *Why shouldn't the City of Chicago take care of the CTA?*

That would defeat the purpose of the RTA. This funding request is for the entire RTA system. All parts of the mass transit system add up to the economic health of the total Northeastern Illinois region. The CTA services 38 suburban communities. Each year, more than 45 million passengers board CTA trains at suburban rail stations. More than 6 million Metra passengers also ride the CTA to their places of work.



## Questions Most Often Asked...

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### ■ ***What has the RTA done to gain our confidence?***

- **The RTA has effectively contained costs and brought unprecedeted financial security to mass transportation in Northeastern Illinois.** Since 1985, the cost for each mile served by the RTA has grown at an annual rate of less than 2.7%. That's less than the rate of inflation.
- The RTA adopted a Strategic Plan in 1988 to help assure the future financial stability of the region's public transportation system. This proposed capital program is a key part of that plan to keep costs under control and the system operating safely and efficiently.

### ■ ***Who runs the RTA and how are those people selected?***

The RTA is governed by a Board of Directors. The Board is composed as follows:

- 4 by the suburban members of Cook County Board of Commissioners
- 4 members are appointed by the Mayor of Chicago
- 1 by the Chairman of the DuPage County Board of Commissioners
- 2 by the Chairmen of the Boards of Commissioners of Lake, McHenry, Kane and Will counties
- The Chairman of the CTA
- The Chairman of the RTA, the first of which was appointed by the Governor and whose successors will be selected by the RTA Board



## Questions Most Often Asked...

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### ■ *Who are the RTA Board of Directors at present and whom do they represent?*

#### RTA Chairman:

Gayle M. Franzen

#### CTA Chairman:

Clark Burrus

#### From Chicago:

Martin R. Binder

Pastora San Juan Cafferty

Jacqueline B. Vaughn

Rev. Addie L. Wyatt

#### From DuPage County:

David L. DeMotte

#### From Suburban Cook County:

Charles G. Dalton

Kathleen K. Parker

Philip Raffe

William D. Walsh

#### From Lake, Kane, McHenry and Will counties:

Jerry D. Boose

Sidney Danoff

### ■ *How much are these directors paid?*

All Board members receive \$25,000 per year for their services, except for the CTA Chairman. He receives no compensation from the RTA.

### ■ *Why should suburban people be interested in public transportation? Aren't they automobile oriented?*

Today's typical suburban family is a working couple, living in a single-family home with a two-car garage. They have a growing need for transportation options to rescue them from the mounting problem of suburban highway gridlock. Areas like Orange County, California, are aggressively developing light rail and commuter rail transportation alternatives to encourage continued economic growth. The Chicago area is already equipped with these alternatives. Northeastern Illinois is second only to New York in its use of mass transit. We must not allow our outstanding transportation asset to deteriorate.



## Questions Most Often Asked...

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### ■ *What's the point of having Pace?*

**There are growing needs to be met as the job base broadens into our suburbs. Pace meets these needs.** Pace provides more than 36 million trips annually. It puts the RTA in a position to react to suburban growth patterns. Pace provides transportation options for students, the elderly and low income residents, who also work and reside outside the city.

### ■ *Why should downstaters care?*

**More than 60% of the Illinois work force lives in Northeastern Illinois.** The region continues as the commerce and transportation center of the Midwest, generating revenue for the entire state. Reliable mass transit is essential to maintain the economic benefits of Northeastern Illinois for the rest of the State.

### ■ *Are you competing for the same dollars as education?*

**No.** Dollars generated for transportation revenue streams are separate and distinct from education funds.

### ■ *Why aren't CTA trains and buses safe from crime?*

**Crime is a twentieth century reality. The Chicago Police Department has created a special transit task force to aggressively attack both the problem and the perception of the problem.** In addition, the RTA last fall amended the CTA's budget to include more funding for security officers. The 1989 CTA budget includes \$5.5 million for security. But perhaps some of the most effective deterrents to mass transit crime are well used, well maintained and well lit facilities.



## Questions Most Often Asked...

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### ■ *Why is CTA service so undependable?*

**Dependability of a transportation system is directly related to the age and condition of the operating equipment.** CTA buses average 11 years in age, with more than 70% of the bus fleet past the 12-year maximum industry standard. Many of the CTA's rail facilities were built before the First World War. The industry norm for rail structures is between 30 and 40 years. 99% of the CTA's elevated structure is over 75 years old.

### ■ *Why should suburbanites support CTA service?*

**Because they are served by it.** Can you imagine the CTA's 250,000 daily suburban passengers getting into cars as an alternative? That would spill 175,000 additional cars out onto our already clogged roads and expressways.

### ■ *Don't buses add to congestion?*

**Buses reduce congestion by taking drivers off the street.** The ratio is roughly fifty vehicles to one bus. Imagine every bus passenger behind the wheel of a car!

### ■ *When are they going to tear down the Loop elevated?*

**For what reason?** The Loop elevated is an asset which conveniently serves and distributes 35 million passengers a year throughout Chicago's central business district. Subway replacement of this structure would cost \$3 to \$5 billion.



## Questions Most Often Asked...

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### ■ *If jobs are moving to the suburbs, then why help the CTA?*

**In spite of continued suburban growth, Chicago's central business district still accounts for 20% of Northeastern Illinois' total employment (12% of the entire state).**

The CTA also moves workers to suburban employers in need of their skills.

### ■ *How is the RTA controlling corruption?*

**The RTA has instituted the Office of Inspector General.**

Terry Hake, a key "Operation Greylord" investigator, holds that office. The CTA has taken additional steps to control internal crime, including the installation of new tamper-proof fare boxes.

### ■ *Why doesn't the RTA eliminate duplicate services?*

**The RTA and its three Service Boards in 1985 initiated a review of perceived duplicated services.** CTA and Metra rail lines and more than 35 bus routes were reviewed. Fifteen routes were restructured as a result of that review. Regional transportation corridors are currently being analyzed to insure that capital investments are focused for long term benefit. It should be noted that while there may be some parallel coverage of bus and rail lines, their use is quite different. Trains tend to move passengers between two distant points. Buses are traditionally used for shorter distances. Riders of each expect different service.



## Questions Most Often Asked...

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### ■ *Why do so many buses run empty?*

For the most part, CTA and Pace buses do carry light loads during non-rush hour periods, but the average bus carries 185,000 passengers each year. Service must meet demand. A need is being met even when ridership is low. Passengers who get to work in the morning are reassured that they can return during the day, should the need dictate. This is what makes mass transit a viable alternative to the automobile.





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